

THE
TALBOTTON NEW ERA

Serving the people of Talbot County since 1879

VOL. 147 • NO. 49 THURSDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2025 talbottonnewera.com 6 PAGES • 1 SECTION • 4 INSERTS • \$1.00



Shop With a Cop Event Planned

Submitted to **NEW ERA**

The Talbotton Police Department is now accepting names for our Shop with a Cop event that is sponsored by the City of Talbotton Police Department. Qualifications for this event are as follows. Children must live within the City Limits of Talbotton. Ages are newborn to 18 years of

age in Public School here at Central.

There will be a live drawing at the City of Talbotton Work Session on December 3rd, 2025. Names must be submitted by 12 noon on December 3rd, 2025 at the Talbotton City Hall located at 15 South Washington Ave. The event will take place on Saturday December 22, 2025

at the Walmart in Thomaston Ga. A legal guardian must accompany the winning child that morning in Thomaston at the Walmart. We will have cops available to walk around in the store. This is a great event. The City of Talbotton Police Department is committed to giving back to our community. Our slogan is "One Community Strong"

Nutcracker Coming to President Theatre

Submitted to **NEW ERA**

The classic ballet *The Nutcracker* will be brought to life by the Columbus Ballet this Sunday, December 7, at the President Theatre in Manchester.

This beloved ballet by Peter Tchaikovsky tells the

story of young girl who receives the gift of a nutcracker during her parents' Christmas Eve party and subsequently dreams that it becomes a handsome prince who dances with her and defends her from the evil rat king.

Tickets for this perform-

ance in Manchester are just \$22.00 each and can be purchased through the theatre web site at <https://thepresidenttheatremanchester.com>. Tickets may also be purchased at the door if space allows.

The performance will begin at 2:30 p.m.

CEHS Fall Fest Draws Large Crowd

By OMENICIA MARSHALL

Central Elementary-High School brought joy, excitement, and community spirit to campus during its Fall Fest held on Nov. 19 in the Arthur Miller Gymnasium. The event highlighted the power of collaboration, with Central Elementary-High School partnering with Family Engagement, the Parent Mentor program, and the Tree of Life organization. Together, they created an unforgettable celebration for students, families, and community members.

The teamwork among

these groups was nothing short of amazing, resulting in one of the school's most successful Fall Fest events to date. Attendees enjoyed a festive atmosphere filled with activities, fellowship, and generous giveaways. More than 50 turkeys were raffled off, along with additional prizes such as bicycles and various household appliances. The excitement and gratitude from families could be felt throughout the gymnasium as raffle winners collected their surprises.

This special event would not have been possible without the generosity of everyone who made donations to

support the cause. Hawk Nation extends a heartfelt thank you to all donors, supporters, and volunteers whose contributions helped make the Fall Fest a meaningful experience for so many families.

Central Elementary-High School also expresses sincere appreciation to each partner, staff member, and community volunteer who played a part in making this event a tremendous success. The school looks forward to continuing these strong community partnerships and creating more opportunities that uplift and engage families throughout the school year.



Submitted Photo

THANKSGIVING FOOD BOXES - The City of Talbotton Police Department gave away Thanksgiving boxes, that WERE complete with collard greens, corn, green beans and a turkey. "The Talbotton Police Department is committed to enforcing the laws of the land, but also helping our community when when can," said Chief C.J. Biggs.

Talbot Sheriff's Office Announces New Program for Senior Citizens

By JOHN KUYKENDALL

Talbot County Sheriff Bobby Gates, Jr. has announced a new program for the department.

"The Talbot County Sheriff's Office cares deeply about our elderly citizens and wants to make sure they're safe and doing well," Gates said.

"We're starting a new Senior Citizen Welfare Check Program for Talbot County residents only. This program gives families and friends the chance to have the Sheriff's Office call or stop by once a week to check in on elderly loved ones.

"If you know a senior in Talbot County who could use a friendly phone call or visit - or if you would like to signup for yourself - please contact us! You can



TALBOT COUNTY SHERIFF BOBBY GATES, JR.

choose whether you would prefer a weekly phone call or a home visit from a deputy."

Only elderly residents of Talbot County can participate in the program.

If you would like to participate in the program please call the Talbot County Sheriff's Office at 706-665-3111.

"Let's all work together to look after our seniors and keep our community safe and connected," Sheriff Gates said. "Thank you for your support!"

4-H'ers to Hold Santa Helper's Event

By JOHN KUYKENDALL

Talbot County 4-H & EFNEP will hold a Pics-n-

Paint event with Santa Helper's on Monday, Dec. 22 at 3 p.m.

The event will be held at

the Talbot County Extension 401 S. Washington Avenue in Talbotton.

Christmas on Main Street Coming to Manchester

Submitted to **NEW ERA**

You are invited to join the city of Manchester for the annual Christmas on Main celebration on Saturday, December 6, from noon to 8 pm.

Celebrate the season with

a full day of festive fun in downtown Manchester! Enjoy a lively market atmosphere, delicious food trucks, activities for all ages, local author meet-and-greets, and cheerful meetings with Santa.

Stroll through downtown to explore special sales, give-

aways, refreshments, and unique offerings from participating shops.

Christmas on Main is proudly hosted by the Downtown and Manchester Development Authorities, who can't wait to ring in the holiday season with you.



Talbot Recreation Department Youth Empowerment Luncheon a Success

Submitted to **NEW ERA**

Talbot County recently witnessed an inspiring and impactful event the "Gen's to Gent's" Youth Empowerment Luncheon, which brought together young men ages 8-16 for a day of growth, learning, and unity. The luncheon was nothing short of a success, leaving participants and leaders energized and hopeful for the future. The qual-

ity of investment shown through their dedication was pure and genuine. All speakers delivered powerful and much needed messages, expressing their true stories while serving the youth and emphasizing the importance of character-building, resilience, and brotherhood. Their words of wisdom resonated deeply, creating an atmosphere of encouragement and empowerment.

The young gentlemen in

attendance were taught respect, the value of bonding as brothers, and practical strategies for overcoming life's challenges. Through interactive discussions and activities, they learned how to navigate obstacles with confidence and integrity. The Talbot County Recreation Department would like to extend a special thanks to Pastor Parker "New Salem Baptist Church, who gra-

ciously opened his doors for the event and made himself available to support this mission. His hospitality and commitment to the community were instrumental in making the luncheon a success.

The Talbot County Recreation Department also would like to extend our gratitude to all participants and parents that was committed to the call. A heartfelt thank you to the Speakers and Male

Mentors who stepped up to guide and inspire the youth. Their presence and dedication demonstrated the power of positive role models in shaping the next generation. This luncheon marks only the beginning of what's great to come. Talbot County is moving forward in a positive direction—united, strong, and committed to building a brighter future for our youth. Talbot County Changing the Culture!

Things to Do In and Around Talbot County

Concerts at Zion

The Columbus State University Schwob Faculty Brass Quintet will be in concert at 1848 Zion Episcopal Church on Saturday, Dec. 6, starting at 4 p.m. If you heard them last year, you know what a special, fantastic concert this is. A special way to celebrate the Christmas season! A reception will follow next door at Straus-LeVert Hall at 5 p.m. The address is 425 S. Washington Avenue in Talbotton. Get your tickets at www.givecampus.com/schools/ColumbusStateUniversity/events/faculty-brass-quintet-at-zion-episcopal-church

Gospel Singings

Evans Chapel will hold its Christmas Gospel Music Singing night, featuring the Kingdom Express and some congregational singing, on Saturday, Dec. 6 at 6 p.m. Come join us in this old-time tradition, get into the holiday spirit and enjoy some great music and singing. Light refreshments. Everyone welcome and encouraged to attend. Evans Chapel

is located at 3436 Chalybeate Springs Road in Woodland.

New Providence Baptist Church in Buena Vista invites you to start the new year right with a night of worship with the community! They invite you to their Congregational Hymn Singing on Sunday, Jan. 11, 2026, beginning at 6 p.m. The singing will be led by Silas Fuller. New Providence Baptist Church is located at 197 Providence Church Road in Buena Vista.

New Life Services

New Life Community Church invites everyone to fellowship with the church family on the second and fourth Sundays of each month. The church is located at 9108 GA HWY 85 in Waverly Hall at the City Hall building. Rev. Desmond Thornton and associate pastor Rev. Solomon Terry presiding.

Church Pickup

Friendship Baptist Church located in Woodland is offering a Transportation Ministry free to any person who would like to attend the church. The transportation service will be available every Sunday from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. For more information please contact Clarence Leonard at 706-427-3443 or Scott Hope at 706-573-8231. A mask is avised and social distancing is required.

Free Produce

Geneva Baptist Church will be giving away free produce to everyone every Thursday at 9:30 a. m. Produce will be given away while supplies last from FTV Food Bank.

Let Us Help You

Christ the King's Outreach Ministry welcomes Harris and Talbot County residents in need of short-term assistance with groceries, utility bills and rental payments and do what the church can to help. Christ the King's Outreach Ministry office is open Tuesday, Wednesday

and Thursday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Appointments can be made by calling the Ministry at (706) 663-0090.

Clothing Center

New Beginnings Outreach Ministry of Woodland has a special clothing center. All items are from community donations. We also have household items, baby accessories and furniture. EVERYTHING IS FREE. For more information contact Bro. Richard Crawl at 706-977-5469 or Pastor Searcy at 706-601-6776.

Free to Needy

Pastor William Searcy of The New Beginnings Church of Woodland announces that their Outreach Ministry's Center will be open two days a week from nine to five on Monday and Friday. This will be the last week. **EVERYTHING IS FREE.** They have clothing, miscellaneous items, including furniture. Remember, this is FREE to the public. Call 706-601-6776.

Change of Service

Valley Grove Baptist Church, Manchester (Tax), will have services on Sunday morning at 9:30 a.m. until further notice.

Help for Elderly

The River Valley Regional Commission Area Agency on Aging is ready to help senior citizens. If any senior citizen in the Talbot County Region has problems or needs help with utility bills or more, please call Woodland Mayor and Board Member of River Valley Regional at 706-256-2900 or 706-256-2928 or Katie Howard at 706-256-2910.

Food Talk Series

UGA Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program is offering free virtual and in-person classes with a series of sessions featuring meals in minutes called "Food Talk." If you are interested or if you have any

questions, please contact Erica Chaney at 706-665-2397 or Erica.Chaney@uga.edu. You can also visit the Talbot County Extension Office at 401 S. Washington Ave. in Talbotton.

How to Submit Items

The Talbotton New Era gladly prints items of interest for the community as well as local church news and events by non-profit organizations. Please note the deadline for items for the community and church events section of the newspaper must be received by 12 noon on Monday, prior

to run date to be printed in that week's issue. Items received after the Monday deadline will not appear until the following week. Please do not send items more than once. Items will continue to be printed in the newspaper until the event is over.

Sorry no flyers, items written in all capital letters or items sent as pdf files are accepted. Please email items as an attached on a Word document or as email body copy. Jpegs, pdfs, etc. can not be used by the newspaper for news copy. Please do not indent or

double space between paragraphs and sentences. Please do not use 2025 or spell out months of the year, simply use Sept. 10. Do not use times in this manner 5:00, please use 5 p.m.

Photographs can only be accepted in jpeg format and as an attachment to an email. Please do not attached them to Word documents. Such photographs do not work well.

Please note the newspaper reserves the right to edit or reject any submission for the things to do section. Thank you for your continued support.

December Events Planned for Area Libraries

By JOHN KUYKENDALL

The Pine Mountain Regional Library System has announced the December schedule for the Manchester, Greenville and Talbot libraries. The calendar is as follows:

- On Monday, Dec. 14 p.m. at the Manchester Library there will be the reading with Gus Therapy Dog visit.
- On Tuesday, Dec. 2 at 1 p.m. in Manchester, 2 p.m. at Talbot Bingo will be held. All day at the Greenville Library Kids Club will have Legos.
- On Wednesday, Dec. 3 10:30 at Manchester it will be story time. At 1 p.m. come and join in chair yoga and at 4 p.m. there will be robots by the Library Teens.
- On Thursday, Dec. 4 at 11 a.m. in Manchester Spill the Tea Book Club will be visiting and at 4 p.m. a gingerbread man craft event will be held. At 4 p.m. in Talbot there will be much fun making sock snowmen.
- On Wednesday, Dec. 5 in Manchester at 3:230 p.m. Kids in the Garden with Denise will be held for all ages it will be all about Christmas Tree Farms.
- On Monday, Dec. 8 in Manchester from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. a Play and Grow

- event for indoor toddler play time will be held and at 12 p.m. for tweens and teens there will be an adaptive craft hour event.
- On Tuesday, Dec. 9 at the Greenville Library there will be an all day Kids Club Take and Make event. At the Talbot Library all day it is game day for the entire family.
 - On Wednesday, Dec. 10 at 10:30 at Manchester it will be story time. At 1 p.m. come and join in chair yoga and at 4 p.m. there will be paint pour ornaments by the Library Teens.
 - On Thursday, Dec. 11 at 4 p.m. in Manchester a Kids Club event by Ms. Spencer will be hel titled cardmaking. At 4 p.m. at the Talbot Library it will be Kids Club gingerbread houses day.
 - On Friday, Dec. 12 at 1 p.m. in Manchester lunch and learn will be held with a cookie and ornament swap for adults.
 - On Saturday, Dec. 13 at 10 a.m. in Manchester it will be Family Storytime and a visit from Santa.
 - On Monday, Dec. 15 at 11 a.m. in Manchester there will be Bunco.
 - On Tuesday, Dec. 16 all day at Greenville Kids Club will hold a Letters to Santa event. At the Talbot Library at 2 p.m. adults can enjoy craft day with crafty Christmas trees.
 - On Wednesday, Dec. 17 at 10:30 at Manchester it will be story time. At 1 p.m. come and join in chair yoga and at 4 p.m. there will be Cocoa Bar for the Library Teens.
 - On Thursday, Dec. 18 all day in Manchester a Santa Scavenger Hunt will be held. At 4 p.m. at the Talbot Library

- a Christmas card event will be held.
- On Monday, Dec. 22 in Manchester from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. the Play and Grow for toddlers event will be held. At Manchester from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. there will be a holiday wrap party for adults with supplies being provided. At the Talbot County Library (with the time to be announced) the Talbot Tales Book Club will present a movie matinee field trip. Please call ahead for show times and please note the Library will be closed that day.
 - On Tuesday, Dec. 23 at 3 p.m. in Greenville there will be a holiday story and craft time by the Kids Club. At 5 p.m. at the Talbot Library it will be pajama night story-time featuring Polar Express.
 - From Wednesday, Dec. 24 through Saturday, Dec. 27 all the libraries will be closed.
 - On Monday, Dec. 29 all activities at the libraries are free and the libraries are open to the public.
 - On Tuesday, Dec. 30 all day at the Greenville Library and Talbot County Library there will be a New Year's Eve Party Hats event by the Kids Club.

- On Wednesday, Dec. 31 at 10:30 at Manchester it will be story time. At 1 p.m. come and join in chair yoga and at 3 p.m. there will be New Year Vision Board for the Library Teens.
- December book titles for the libraries are as follows:
- Manchester: Local Woman Missing by Mary Kubica
- Talbot: Talbot Tales -The Housemaid by Freida McFadden.

Autos For Sale

Wide Variety To Choose From

14 Ford Mustang, Gray, \$6,200

16 Chevy Colorado, Ext. Cab, White, \$10,400

18 Ford F-150, 4x4, Crew Cab, Silver, \$14,400

18 Honda Civic, Black, \$9,600

15 Honda Pilot, Silver, \$8,900

21 GMC Sierra, Crew Cab, White, \$18,400

14 GMC Sierra, 4x4, Double Cab, Maroon, \$13,400

20 Kia Sedona, Gray, \$8,900

15 Ford Explorer, Blue, \$6,900

11 Jeep Wrangler, Black, \$8,900

19 Kia Optima, Blue, \$7,200

21 Chevy Malibu, White, \$9,400

15 GMC Terrain, White, \$6,900

14 Dodge Challenger, Blue, \$7,400

14 Chevy Equinox, White, \$5,400

18 Jeep Cherokee, White, \$7,900

17 Chevy Equinox, White, \$7,400

17 Dodge Ram, 4 Door, Gray, \$10,900

18 Dodge Journey, Red, \$7,900

19 Chevy Equinox, White, \$10,400

22 Nissan Altima, Gray, \$10,400

18 Jeep Renegade, Gray, \$7,900

16 Chevy Trax, Blue, \$6,400

17 Nissan Frontier, Ext. Cab, White, \$7,900

16 Honda CRV, Blue, \$10,600

17 Ford Explorer, Blue, \$8,900

17 Chevy Equinox, Gray, \$8,400

17 Ford Expedition, Black, \$8,900

14 Ford F-150, 4x4, Crew Cab, Gray, \$13,400

13 Chevy Silverado, Crew Cab, Maroon, \$11,900

16 Jeep Renegade, White, \$7,400

Truck & Jeep

Auto Sales

27 miles South of Butler on Hwy. 19

862-3362

www.TruckandJeep.com



START AGAIN

COUNSELING

EVERYDAY IS A CHANCE TO START AGAIN

Court Mandated Services & Counseling Support

• DUI Clinical Evaluations (State Approved)

• Substance Use Counseling

• Parenting Groups & Classes

• Substance Use Group Meetings

• Anger Management Evaluation & Classes

• Theft Prevention Classes

• Corporate Educational Workshop

25 E. Main Street, Suite B • Manchester, GA

404-919-0376 •www.startagaincounseling.com

NOTICE OF PRICE INCREASE



Attention Talbot County Residents

On January 1st 2026, the annual price of garbage fees will increase from \$200.00 to \$225.00 for one garbage bin. The price for an additional cart will remain the same, \$137.00.

Green For Life (GFL) is committed to providing you with high quality, timely, and professional waste management services. This price increase will help GFL maintain those values as the company grow and move forward.



File Photo

For deer hunters who have not reached the 12 deer limit (no more than 10 antlerless and 2 antlered, with at least one quality buck required), there is still time to do so. Archery season this year has been extended to Jan. 31, 2026 and firearms season ends on Jan. 11, 2026.

GOSPEL MUSIC

SINGING

Christmas at

Evans Chapel

3436 Chalybeate Springs Road

Woodland, GA

December 6, 2025 - 6 p.m.

Featuring the

Kingdom Express

Come join us in this old-time tradition, get into the holiday spirit and enjoy some great music and singing. Light refreshments. Everyone welcome and encouraged to attend.

THE TALBOTTON NEW ERA

USPS 532-880

a division of

The Georgia Trust for Local News

DuBose Porter, Executive Director

Pam Burney, General Manager

Caleb Slinkard, Executive Editor

JOHN KUYKENDALL

PUBLISHER/EDITOR

JACK BAGLEY

LAYOUT EDITOR

BRYAN GETER

ADVERTISING REPRESENTATIVE

Phone (706) 846-3188

starmercuryjohn@gmail.com

P. O. Box 426

Manchester, GA 31816

Official Legal Organ of Talbot County.

Dear Santa Claus ...

Thanksgiving is over, and I hope you didn't overdo it at the table. (I did. I always do.) The turkey ... the stuffing (we don't eat dressing where I come from) ... the potatoes ... the green beans ... the pumpkin pie ... oh my, I'm getting hungry all over again just thinking about it.

Which is bad, because Thanksgiving undid a lot of the work I'd done in losing weight since being ill earlier in the year.

But enough about Thanksgiving! Christmas is right around the corner!

Many years ago, when I was just a lad, those words were cause for excitement as well as speculation. I knew Santa Claus would come to see me; I just didn't know how good he thought I'd been during the previous year, so I didn't know what he would be leaving for me under the Christmas tree in the living room.

As the years went by and I became more and more cognizant of exactly how good I'd been, I realized that my expectations from Jolly Old St. Nick were getting smaller and smaller. I can only suppose that the reason I get nothing from old Mr. Claus is because I've become such a cad he doesn't even bother to visit my Christmas tree.

(Of course, the fact that I don't put up a Christmas tree any more could have something to do with that. I live alone. What's the point?)

I do make sure I send him a letter each year, as I've done since I could write coherently. (Those of you who don't think I write coherently yet, be quiet.) Each year, the "wish list" has grown shorter and shorter. That lad I used to be would just append the old Sears catalog and say "One of everything!" I made it through a few disappointing holiday seasons before I realized how the whole thing really worked.

Now, though, I'm going to share this year's letter to Santa, and it might surprise you if you're familiar with my earlier notes.

Dear Santa, Yes, it's me again. You have a pretty big file of letters from me over these decades, but this one I think will completely blow your mind.

Santa, I don't want you to bring me anything for Christmas this year.

You may want the elves to come help you get off the floor, as I'm sure that's where you ended up after reading that last line.

I've come to the realization that, at my age, I already have everything I need, and a lot of what I want. I don't have everything I want and that's a good thing - people



Jack Bagley
Musings of An Aging Mind

who get everything they want are never satisfied, and always want more. I don't want to be one of those people.

If you had anything specifically earmarked for me, please give it to someone who can use it. I'm doing just fine.

The milk and cookies will be out for you should you decide to drop by anyway.

Love,
Jack

There. That's done.

Now, on to the more serious stuff about this upcoming holiday.

As you know if you're a regular reader, this is the Christmas I almost didn't make. Twice this year, my body has tried to cash in my chips, and only the work of some dedicated doctors - and the hand of God - has kept that from happening and kept me here. I'm still not back to 100% yet, as the last of the pneumonia is still being chased out of my lungs. As a good friend said, I didn't get sick overnight, and I won't get better overnight.

But I am getting better. Having gone through a heart attack, congestive heart failure, and a very bad case of pneumonia, I can assure you I have a much different outlook on whatever years I have been given. I know I was kept here for a reason, and now I have to find that reason and do whatever it is God expects me to do.

(Uh, a hint would be nice.)

As a philosophical exercise, I have tried to figure out just what it is.

Is there someone I have hurt or offended and must apologize and make things right? Sure there are, quite a few.

Have I broken any laws, whether of man or God? Yes, just like everybody else, I've done that. I've already spoken to God about those; not sure what to do about the ones against man.

After a while, and a few dozen hours of lost sleep, I decided not to puzzle it out any more, and just let myself be led to what I am supposed to do. I can't foul up these second chances I've been given.

Maybe I could ask Santa what the unfinished business I have is.

With my track record, though, he probably wouldn't tell me.

I'm Not Sure About a Goat and Spider Christmas

Thanksgiving is behind us and the Christmas season is just around the corner. Ironically, the Friday after Thanksgiving kind of begins the Christmas season with all the shopping that happens on that day. Anyway, with Christmas not far away I'm going to begin my annual things you may or may not know about Christmas.

I like to research the Christmas traditions of other countries and cultures and I'm sometimes surprised by what I may read so I'm going to share some of those crazy things in this week's column.

How about a giant Christmas goat? In Sweden, a giant straw goat that stands 42.6 free high and weighs in at a whopping 3.6 tons has been a part of the Christmas celebration since 1966. According to BestLife, The goat was created to draw shoppers to the Swedish city where it resides.

Here in the United States, part of the Christmas tradition is a large spread of food and deserts, most of all that are home cooked. In Japan Christmas dinner tradition is a little different.

In 2024 BBC news reported, that 3.5 million Japanese

households ordered Kentucky Fried Chicken for their Christmas dinners. What caused the popular phenomenon? A wildly successful marketing campaign from more than 50 years ago. One night in 1970, KFC Japan's first manager, Takeshi Okawara, was struck with the brilliant epiphany to sell a Christmas dinner. With few other distinctly Japanese Christmas traditions, marketing KFC as the equivalent of a modern-day, affordable Christmas roast was the right idea at the right time. Four years later, the idea made its way up the corporate ladder and into the annals of Japanese Christmas history.

If you are one of those folks who enjoy warm weather and picnicking, Africa might be just the place for you to enjoy your Christmas.

In Africa during December temperatures range from about 75 degrees to 90. So it's perfect weather for picknicking. According to BBC, in Cape Town it's common to see parties with barbecue grills with meats and sides. Now that is what I could call my kind of weather and food, but not at



John Kuykendall
Publisher & Editor

Christmas.

Venezuelans have a unique way of traveling to Christmas mass.

While attending Christmas mass may not rank high upon the list of Christmas events and traditions, in Venezuela it's not just a time for a church visit, in Caracas, Venezuelans bring about a fun time as well. According to information I obtained from MSN, In the 1950s, Venezuelans began celebrating the holiday with Las Patinatas Navideñas, or the all-night skating festival that ends with a morning mass. The event runs from Dec. 16 to the 24. It is a jolly family affair with food and caroling, and the block party vibes keep spirits high as the crowd glides into 5 a.m. or 6 a.m. mass.

Oh my, it's the scary Christmas spider! In the

United States we may just owe Ukraine our tradition of Christmas trees, garland and more. According to MSN, a Ukrainian folk tale might have helped bring the Christmas tree to life.

The folk tale goes something like this, a widow and her young children came across a pine cone, which they planted in the floor of their home. With great care, they nurtured the tree, but come Christmas Eve, they had no ornaments to dress it. The next morning, the family woke to discover the tree covered in cobwebs that magically transformed into gossamer threads of gold and silver, thus providing an origin story for Christmas tinsel. Today, you might spot a Christmas spider ornament on Ukrainian Christmas trees. Named pavuchkys, or little spiders, these little guys are a wink to the holiday inspired folk tale.

While all of this is wonderful, I believe I'll just stick to the good old American traditions. Plenty of good food, cooler weather, waling not skating, no Christmas goat and above all, no spiders.

There will be more about the holiday next week.

The Early History of Christmas

In case you haven't noticed, only three weeks remain until Christmas.

While recognizing the birth of Jesus, the modern celebration of Christmas has evolved from various pagan rituals and festivals that took place prior to the existence of Christianity, and today we delve into the history of the modern celebration of Christmas.

Among ancient civilizations across the European continent, festivals held around the time of the winter solstice were quite common. During such gatherings, crowds would be present as bakers and farmers would barter their goods with shepherds and shopkeepers. Those with coin would purchase things they needed. Those without coin would exchange other items of value perhaps including their labor for things needed.

Of course, during such celebrations coin and other items of value would be used for various libations and forms of entertainment. Undoubtedly a merry time was enjoyed by many of those attending.

Noted among those festivals was the Northern European Yule, or just Yule,

held among the Norse. This festival not only celebrated the winter solstice, but the return of the Sun in the form of longer days. Yule featured not only the giving of gifts, but the burning of a Yule log for good fortune and decorating with evergreen boughs as a symbol of life during the darkness of winter. Interestingly, the Yule festival could last up to 12 days - much like the Christmas song often heard today. Often the festival included parades led by a figure portraying Odin, chief deity of the Norse.

A BIT later in history, the vast Roman Empire influenced much of the known world, but it was influenced as well by those civilizations it conquered along with those it was unable to conquer.

The Romans had two notable mid-winter festivals including Saturnalia and Sol Invictus, or Dies Natalis Solis Invicti.

Celebrated in mid-December, the Saturnalia festival honored Saturn, the Roman god of agriculture. It was originally held for a single day but would expand to last a week. During that week, slaves would be served by their masters and allowed to



Andy Kober
Columnist

participate in the various celebrations. Homes were decorated with holly, fir, ivy, or whatever greenery was available. During Saturnalia the giving of small gifts became part of the celebration.

About 274 AD, Emperor Aurelian established a new festival named Dies Natalis Solis Invicti, translated from Latin as Birthday of the Unconquered Sun. It is also known simply as Sol Invictus, also Latin, which translates as Unconquered Sun. This festival was specifically held on December 25, and honored Sol or the sun god. Coins were minted with the image of the sun god and this event provided a continuation of the Saturnalia festival.

DURING this time Christianity is not yet an established religion. At best it would have a rather small

underground movement that was illegal to practice. It would not become an established religion until Roman Emperor Constatine converted to Christianity about 312 AD and legalized it. Christianity will then grow and with it the establishment of specific holy days, including Christmas, celebrating the birth of Jesus.

YET, OVER the years the celebration of Christmas incorporated bits and pieces of the winter celebrations that preceded it, including parades, parties, the giving of gifts, the use of greenery for decoration, and even celebrating December 25 as the birth of Jesus -- were all drawn from both pagan and Roman festivals. That is not to diminish Christmas, but rather to explore its historical roots.

Next week we will explore the evolution of Christmas and until then here is hoping you enjoy the lights, decorations, and fun of the season.

That's my opinion.

A newspaper columnist for over 35 years, Andy Kober can be reached by email at andykober@hotmail.com

* Say One Thing And Do Another *
Silence Gives Consent

Greetings and blessings!

Certainly pray all had a blessed and safe Thanksgiving. Hopefully we will continue being thankful and giving as we are now entering the Christmas Season. However but fortunately, I was allowed to speak to the Talbot County School Board and school administrators in the October and November board meeting. Unfortunately, to no resolve that I had hoped for that would benefit some of my students/family that rides my school bus and others as well. Let's be clear, I genuinely love my Alma Mater, I render unwaveringly support in any and every way, on any given day. By no mean did I speak on my students' behalf to create a fuss or fight, but to say what I believe in my heart is right. Meanwhile, I came to CEHS 20 years ago and have been driving my community



Pres Hall
Columnist

and neighborhood K-12 students since. I have literally watched the children come, grow, learn and go. So hopefully, understandably, it's obvious I do take matter and concern personal as I hope you would too. Actually, no child should be denied the opportunity to be a part of any program to increase their learning, especially those that want to. You see, what affects my children, affects me because I teach them daily, the Golden Rule (Luke 6:31). I constantly teach them to Love God and others too. I teach them that we are a fam-

ily, and family stands up for each other. I tell them they are to give respect, care for and love each other. More so, how to do the right thing and treat each other like they want to be treated. And too, to do right, when no one is looking because it's the right thing to do, that's character. So then, it would be hypocritical to say one thing to them and do another when they look to me for leadership and protection. Ultimately, to make a real difference in our young people lives, we must careful walk the talk. We must say what we mean and mean what we say. And again, we cannot say one thing and do another because they are watching, even when we don't see them.

In fact, I boldly say with no apologies; I love my bus family and tell them everyday. Love is Concern which I'm overly concerned about

their safety and welfare. As for me, if I believe it's right, I fight for it, if I believe it's wrong, I fight against it until proven differently. But to sit silence and say nothing, gives consent. Rightly so, I admired Congressman John Lewis so much because he did not mind getting in "Good Trouble" and neither do I. So imagine if Martin Luther King had said nothing. See, I try to exemplify my military sworn oath, "Leave No One Behind," which applies to our children. All rules and policies are not perfect, neither am I, so therefore there should be an evaluation and exception to every rule. Therefore, I have based my opinion on facts and my personal experiences. In other words, I have been there and done that and now, I'm done. No names were called to protect the innocent. Thank You Lord!

THE TALBOTTON NEW ERA is published weekly by The Georgia Trust for Local News at 3051 Roosevelt Highway, Manchester, Georgia 31816. *The Talbotton New Era* is published proudly for the citizens of Talbot County and its goal is to produce quality, profitable, community oriented newspapers that you, our readers, are proud of. We will reach that goal through hard work, teamwork, loyalty, and a strong dedication toward printing the truth.

USPS 589-340. Periodical postage paid at Manchester, Georgia, 31816.

FOR SUBSCRIPTIONS call (706) 846-3188 or write to Circulation Manager, *Talbotton New Era*, P. O. Box 426, Manchester, Georgia 31816. Subscription rates: Online and print, \$55 per year; Print only, \$45 per year; Online only, \$25 per year. Prices include all sales taxes. Single print copy \$1.00.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to P. O. Box 426, Manchester, Georgia 31816.

“The Lord Himself goes before you and will be with you. He will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid. Do not be discouraged.”
Deuteronomy 31:8

FEATURES PAGE

The Talbotton New Era • Thursday, December 4, 2025 • Page 4-A



File Photo in Public Domain

COPS WERE NEEDED - This week in 1969, the Altamont Free Concert takes place in California, with drugs and alcohol flowing freely. Instead of hiring police officers to provide security, the Hells Angels Outlaw Motorcycle Club is hired for free beer. Trouble starts early and gets worse as the concert continues into the night. Mick Jagger and the Rolling Stones are on stage when a person storms the stage. The person ends up dead and a Hells Angels member is charged with murder.

1969 - Murder at Altamont Free Concert This Week In American History

By ANDY KOBER

Here is what happened this week in American History.

• **Dec. 4.** On this day in 1950, remaining US Eighth Army forces along with US Marine forces, UN forces and South Korean forces are in a general retreat, heading back toward South Korea. They are being pursued by Chinese army units and remaining North Korean troops. Gen. Douglas MacArthur's planned Home Before Christmas offensive into North Korea and to the Chinese border is in tatters. Some US and UN forces are accused of having "bug out" fever, or wanting to retreat without fighting the enemy. The US 3rd Infantry Division and US Marine Corps units are charged with loading supplies and equipment at Wonsan before abandoning the area. Pyongyang is being abandoned without usable military hardware being destroyed, including 15 M46 Patton tanks loaded on railcars. Worse, the Chinese Peoples Volunteer Army was not even in immediate pursuit. The Joint Chiefs of Staff and MacArthur are disagreeing on how to stem or stop the general retreat. Calls are being made to retreat all the way back to the port city of Pusan, though demands are made to defend Seoul. As the American public is criticizing the retreat and leadership of MacArthur, he in turn places blame on the Truman Administration for restrictions placed on the military. For days on end, a succession of retreats continued.

• **Dec. 5.** In 1956, Alfred "Butch" Lee, Jr. is born in Santurce, San Juan, Puerto Rico. While a young child, Lee and his family move to Harlem, New York. He plays basketball in high school and then at Marquette University. Lee wants to play for the US Olympic team but instead his coach sends another player. Lee returns to Puerto Rico, qualifies for the Puerto Rican national basketball team and competes against the US team in the 1976 Summer Olympics. Back at Marquette, Lee leads the team to the national championship in 1977. He will be drafted by the Atlanta Hawks, becoming the first Puerto Rican and Latin-American to play in the NBA. He plays in the NBA for two years before being signed by international teams. Lee's playing career spans 15 years with another 10 years spent as a coach.

• **Dec. 6.** Today in 1969, Jefferson Airplane, the Rolling Stones, and other notable bands participate in the Altamont Free Concert held at Altamont Speedway near Tracy, California. Promoted as a counterculture rock concert and with some comparing it to Woodstock, the event draws about 300,000 attendees. The Hells Angels outlaw motorcycle club was somehow tasked with providing security. During the concert rowdy behavior, including multiple fights, takes place and becomes worse when a motorcycle belonging to one of the Hells Angels is knocked over. The Stones are performing when Meredith Hunter, a young black male and member of the East Bay Executioners street gang, attempts climbing onto

the stage. Hunter had allegedly been using both amphetamines and methamphetamines, and was carrying a handgun. A camera captures the incident as Hunter and some of the Hells Angels began fighting and Hunter drew his gun. He was then stabbed repeatedly by Hells Angels member Alan Passaro, who had a lengthy police record. Hunter will die of the wounds and Passaro will be charged with murder. A jury would find that Passaro acted in self-defense and was not guilty of murder.

• **Dec. 7.** In 1966, alternative rock vocalist and guitarist Louise Lightner Post was born in St. Louis, Missouri. In 1992, Post, along with Nina Gordon, co-founded the band Veruca Salt. The group served as opening band for established performers before coming to be known for the songs "Volcano Girls" and "Shutterbug". Post is one of a large group of women alleging sexual harassment by film director James Toback.

• **Dec. 8.** On this day in 1963, Pan Am Flight 214, a Boeing 707, departs San Juan, Puerto Rico, bound for Baltimore, Maryland, and then to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The aircraft made the Baltimore stop and with a crew of eight plus 73 passengers, took off for Philadelphia. As the aircraft approached Philadelphia, there was a line of thunderstorms in the area with frequent lightning and wind gusts of 50 miles per hour. Suddenly, at 8:58 pm the crew radioed, "Mayday, mayday, mayday, Clipper 214 out of control. Here we go." The crew of a nearby aircraft reported seeing Flight 214 "going down in flames." The aircraft crashed near Elkton, Maryland, killing all aboard. There were a number of witnesses with 99 reporting seeing lighting strike the airplane and 72 reporting seeing a ball of fire immediately after the strike. Investigators would determine that a lighting strike not only resulted in loss of part of the left wing, but also ignited fuel.

• **Dec. 9.** In 1775, the Revolutionary War Battle of Great Bridge takes place in what is now Chesapeake, Virginia. British troops number over 400. The Patriot militia has 860 men fighting for their land. The British fortified one side of the bridge while the Virginia militia held the other. There had been skirmishes between the two when John Murray, 4th Earl of Dunmore and the royal governor of Virginia, decreed being willing to emancipate any slaves that joined the British and helped fight the colonials. Enough slaves accepted the offer to form the Ethiopian Regiment. Prior to the battle, Dunmore received additional help with his force soon numbering nearly 900. Shortly before dawn, the British attacked but ran into a hail of musket and rifle fire from fortified positions and the attack failed. The British subsequently retreated from the area. Today a monument stands to commemorate the battle.

• **Dec. 10.** Today in 1906, President Theodore Roosevelt is awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his part in negotiating an end to the Russo-Japanese War. Roosevelt became the first American to receive a Nobel prize, and did so when the Nobel Peace Prize actually meant something.

Meteor Shower Peaks Next Week

By ANDY KOBER

Don't be that person. It seems that every year around Christmas, social media post reports the Star of Bethlehem will be visible the night of Christmas Eve. The details tend to vary, but the message is the same. And without checking the validity of the post, otherwise intelligent people begin sharing it.

As with so much "news" found on social media, it is simply untrue.

Of the four Gospels, only Matthew mentions the Star of Bethlehem. One would think that such an astronomical event highlighting the birth of Jesus would have been mentioned in multiple Gospels. But it was not.

Many theories have circulated regarding the Star of Bethlehem. It is known that Halley's Comet was visible in 12 BC. It is also known that a comet or supernova was seen about 5 BC. But back then, comets, novae and other unexplainable events in the sky were considered bad omens.

Whatever the Star of Bethlehem might have been has been lost to history, which is not intended to cast doubt that something caught the attention of the wise men and prompted them to find the Christ child. Whatever it

ANDY'S ASTRONOMY

was that caught their attention might well have been a miracle and has to be accepted on faith.

Please don't be the person that keeps this hoax alive by perpetrating it.

What you might see prior to Christmas is the Geminids Meteor Shower at peak activity.

Peak activity is forecast for the overnight hours of Dec. 13-14, and many of the meteors should be visible before midnight though typically the hours of 1 am to 3 am prove best for watching the meteors. At peak, the Geminids Meteor Shower is known to produce up to 120 meteors per hour. The Geminids Meteor Shower is produced by particles of dust and debris left by the asteroid 3200 Phaethon. Light from the waning crescent moon should not cause much of an issue in viewing the meteor shower.

Looking ahead, the Ursids Meteor Shower should start on Dec. 17, followed by the final meteor shower of 2025, the Quaranitids Meteor Shower beginning on Dec. 28.

Keep your eyes on the sky for passing fireballs.

Meteors can flash across the

sky anytime and extraordinarily bright meteors are often referred to as fireballs --- and they are spotted quite often.

On Thursday, Nov. 27, Thanksgiving Day, five people across Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina reported seeing a fireball.

The fireball was first reported at 7:47 pm by a skywatcher in High Point, NC. The fireball was seen as far north as High Point, NC; as far east as Durham, NC; as far south as West Columbia, SC, and as far west as Euaharloo, GA. The fireball appeared to be traveling from south-southeast to the north-northwest.

None of the sky watchers reported hearing the fireball make noise or seeing it fragment.

Anyone seeing a fireball is urged to report the sighting to <https://amsmeteors.org>

Going outside and looking at the sky, especially the night sky, can be fun and educational for the entire family.

There are a number of free apps available to help identify stars and constellations, and some of the apps will show satellites.

Happy skywatching!



Whose is the most reproduced portrait in U.S. history?

By JACK BAGLEY

didyouknowcolumn@gmail.com

Now that we are in the last month of the year, and getting ready for Christmas, Hanukkah, and all the other great holidays, I thought it appropriate that I remind you of something.

Winter is coming. (Did you ever see three little words that can sound like a good thing and a bad thing all at the same time?)

Yes, time to prepare for the cold, the snow (depending on where you are), and all that other stuff. Get your snow suits, toboggans and sleigh bells ready!

While you do, enjoy another round of silly trivia, which I dredge up just for you.

Did you know ...

... Father's Day did not become a nationwide observance in the United States until 1972? It took 58 years for Father's Day to gain the same prominence as Mother's Day, which was recognized in 1914. (Why doesn't that surprise me?)

... a prisoner of war camp during the Civil War let civilians look at inmates? The Elmira Prison Camp in New York had two observation towers constructed specifically for onlookers. Citizens could pay 15 cents to climb the towers and look at the Confederate prisoners being held. The prison even had concession stands near the towers that sold cakes, peanuts, and lemonade -- while the prisoners inside were on near-starvation rations. The site is currently occupied by the Elmira Correctional Facility, a maximum-security state prison. (And no, you can't buy tickets or concessions and look at the inmates today. The war's over. Move along.)

... asking for your own credit report does not hurt your credit score? It's only when inquiries come from those from whom you've applied for credit that your score takes a hit. (It never hurts to ask, you know.)

... a species of salamander exists that has a unique way of controlling its population? If the tiger salamander senses that the population in their little society is getting too big, they develop offspring which have specially adapted heads. This allows them to eat their own species until population levels fall back to normal. (I have a line here, but it would close the show.)

... the most-reproduced portrait in U.S. history probably isn't of whom you might think? You might think, as I did, that the portrait of George Washington (1732-1799) on the one-dollar bill is the most reproduced portrait in American history. The portrait, by artist Gilbert Stuart (1755-1828), has adorned the buck since 1869 and continues to do so today. But if you thought that, you'd be mistaken. The most reproduced portrait in U.S. history is that of DeWitt Clinton (1769-1828), the New York governor who was responsible for the building of the Erie Canal. True, Clinton's portrait hasn't appeared on much currency, but it could be found on the tax stamps used on packages of cigarettes. His



mug appeared on every cigarette tax stamp issued by the government from 1883 to 1959, numbering in the billions -- if not trillions -- of stamps. (Thanks to David for the tip!)

... a famous American writer was very, very fond of cats? Mark Twain (born Samuel Clemens, 1835-1910) loved cats so much that if he traveled, he would rent cats to keep him company. His love of felines went back to his childhood, when he lived in a house that had nineteen of them. According to Mental Floss, Twain once said, "If man could be crossed with the cat, it would improve man, but it would deteriorate the cat." (Twain also gave sage political advice: "Politicians are a lot like diapers. They should be changed frequently, and for the same reason." I can't improve on that.)

... Braille was invented by a pre-teenager? When he was twelve years old, Louis Braille (1809-1852), who had been blinded at the age of three, used a military system of silent communication to develop the touch-reading system used since. (Thanks to Mason for the tip!)

... two actors who turned down Academy Award™-winning roles ended up winning awards anyway, for roles the other refused? In 1967, actor George C. Scott (1927-1999) was under consideration for the lead role in the movie *In the Heat of the Night*, a crime drama set in Mississippi. He wasn't interested, and the role went to Rod Steiger (1925-2002). Steiger went on to win an Oscar as Best Actor. Then, in 1970, the producers of *Patton* considered offering the lead role to Steiger, who refused. The part went to Scott, who earned a Best Actor Oscar. Scott declined the award, however, as he felt that actors' performances should not be compared to each other. (Funny how things work out.)

... the first "Bond Girl" appeared in the first James Bond movie? Actress Eunice Gayson (1928-2018) played Sylvia Trench, girl friend of super spy 007, in 1962's *Dr. No*. (She was the first in a long, long line of lovelies.)

... a world leader is a martial arts expert? Vladimir Putin (born 1952), long-time president of Russia, holds a black belt in judo. (You challenge him. I'm not gonna do it.)

... the first athletic team mascot appeared in 1889? Yale University offered a bulldog named Handsome Dan in that year. (Knowing what bulldogs look like, I guess the name was something of a joke.)

... a fire engine and a fire truck are not the same thing? Seriously. Fire engines transport huge quantities of water to fight fires, while a fire truck carries ladders and other support equipment. (Details are important.)

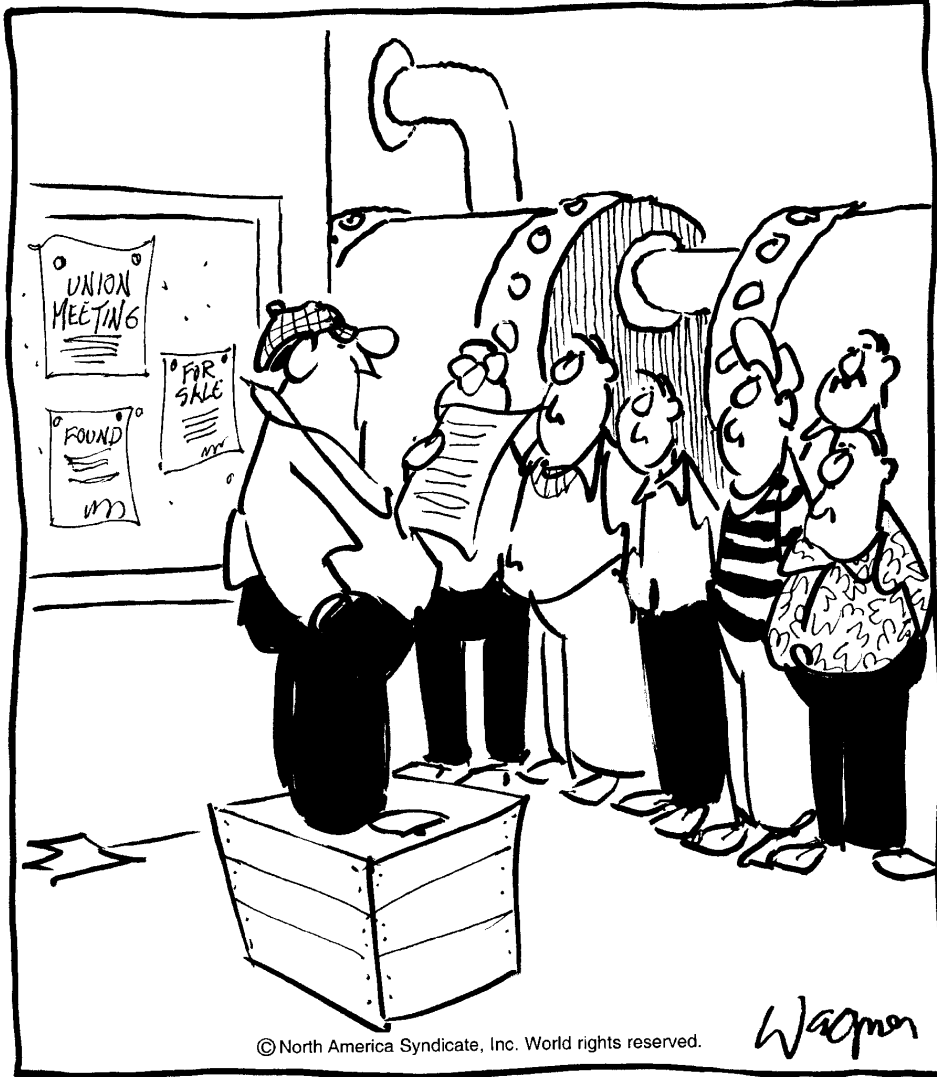
... a popular author had a peculiar way of doing her writing? Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) wrote her numerous novels standing up. (Hey, whatever works for you.)

... one in four British veterinarians say they have treated drunk dogs? (Make of that what you will.)

Now ... you know!

Copyright © 2025 Jack Bagley

GRIN and BEAR IT. *Wagman*



© North America Syndicate, Inc. World rights reserved.

"All the good jobs are being outsourced, but yours are safe."



File Photo

SANTA VISITS WAVERLY HALL - Old Saint Nick made an appearance in last year's Christmas parade in Waverly Hall. He is expected to be in the parade this year as well.

Waverly Hall Sets Christmas Parade, Party

By JACK BAGLEY

The city of Waverly Hall invites you to their annual Christmas Parade and Party on Saturday, December 13.

Parade lineup takes place at 2 p.m. at Waverly Hall Baptist Church on Highway

208, with the parade beginning at 3 p.m. The Christmas party will be held immediately afterward at the Bobby Lowman Recreation Center on Oneal Drive.

The event is sponsored by the Waverly Hall Historical Society. For more information, contact Ella Marshall at (706) 329-8235.

NEW ERA PUBLIC NOTICES

HOW TO PLACE A LEGAL NOTICE

EMAIL: starmercurylegals@gmail.comnFor information regarding legal notices you may call 706-846-3188 or use the email address above.

DEADLINES FOR LEGAL NOTICES

Noon on Friday prior to run date. If legal notice is past deadline a late fee will be charged. First affidavit is at no cost. There is a charge for each additional affidavit.

COSTS FOR LEGAL NOTICES

\$15 per 100 words times weeks published. A typing fee will be charged for legals not on a Word document or in regular email body copy. Cost depends on words in legal notice.

Debtors & Creditors Notice

25-113

NOTICE TO DEBTORS AND CREDITORS

TALBOT COUNTY, GEORGIA
IN RE: ESTATE OF MELDA WHITTLE BLACKMAR

All creditors of the Estate of MELDA WHITTLE BLACKMAR late of Talbot County, are hereby notified to render their demands to the undersigned according to law, and all persons indebted to said estate are required to make immediate payment.

This 21ST day of NOVEMBER, 2025.

THOMAS KNOX K. BLACKMAR
Administrator(s) of the Estate of
MELDA WHITTLE BLACKMAR,
Deceased

ATTY: DENNIS MCPHERSON
8009 GA HWY 208
WAVERLY HALL, GA 31831
706-596-1010

(12:4, 11, 18, 25)

General Legals

25-110

IN THE JUVENILE COURT OF TALBOT COUNTY STATE OF GEORGIA

IN THE INTEREST OF:

NAME: L.L.D.
SEX: FEMALE
AGE: 17 YEARS
DOB: 08/14/2008
CHILD UNDER THE AGE OF 18 YEARS
JUVENILE ACTION FILE
NO 2025-JV-010

NOTICE OF SUMMONS

TO: Robert McHugh and all males of the world with a parental interest in the above-named child. The mother of the child is Stacy Yvette McKinney.

NOTICE OF EFFECT OF TERMINATION JUDGMENT

Georgia law provides that you can permanently lose your rights as a parent. A petition to terminate parental rights has been filed on the 4 th day of November 2025 requesting the court to terminate your parental rights to your child. A copy of the petition to terminate parental rights may be obtained by contacting the clerk of court at 706-665-3239. A court hearing of your case has been scheduled for the 6th day of January 2026 at 9:30 a.m. at the Juvenile Court of Talbot County. If you fail to appear, the court can terminate your rights in your absence. If the court at the trial finds that the facts set out in the petition to terminate parental rights are true and that termination of your rights will serve the best interests of your child, the court can enter a judgment ending your rights to your child. If the judgment terminates your parental rights, you will no longer have any rights to your child. This means that you will not have the right to visit, contact, or have custody of your child or make any decision affecting your child or your child's earning or property. Your child will be legally freed to be adopted by someone else. Even if your parental rights are termi-

nated: (1) You will still be responsible for providing financial support (child support payments) for your child's care unless and until your child is adopted; and

(2) Your child can still inherit from you unless and until your child is adopted. This is a very serious matter. You should contact an attorney immediately so that you can be prepared for the court hearing. You have the right to hire an attorney and to have him or her represent you. If you cannot afford to hire an attorney, the court will appoint an attorney if the court finds that you are an indigent person. Whether or not you decide to hire an attorney, you have the right to attend the hearing of your case, to call witnesses on your behalf, and to question those witnesses brought against you.

NOTICE TO BIOLOGICAL FATHERS WHO ARE NOT LEGAL FATHERS

Pursuant to O.C.G.A. ? 15-11-283(c), the biological father who is not the legal father is hereby notified that he will lose all rights to the child and will not be entitled to object to the termination of his rights to the child unless, within thirty (30) days of the receipt of this notice, he 1) files a Petition to Legitimate the child, and 2) files a notice of filing of the Petition to Legitimate with the Juvenile Court of Harris County, in which action is pending. Pursuant to O.C.G.A. ? 15-11-283(e), you are also notified that the Court may enter an order terminating all rights of a biological father, including any right to object thereafter to such proceedings: 1) who fails to file a timely petition to legitimate the child named in a petition brought pursuant to this article and notice in accordance with subsection (c) of this Code section; 2) whose petition to legitimate is subsequently dismissed for failure to prosecute; or 3) whose petition to legitimate does not result in a court order finding that he is the legal father of the child named in the petition brought pursuant to this article.

WITNESS the Honorable Joey Loudermilk, Judge of said Court, this 4th day of November 2025.

/s/ Penny Dillingham-Mahone
Penny Dillingham-Mahone, Clerk
Clerk of Talbot County Juvenile Court
(11:20, 27, 12:4, 11)

Probate Notices

25-112

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF TALBOT COUNTY STATE OF GEORGIA

IN RE: ESTATE OF BENJAMIN BUFFINGTON, DECEASED

ESTATE NO. 2025-P-47

PETITION FOR LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION NOTICE

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: FRAN BUFFINGTON, has petitioned to be appointed Administrator(s) of the estate of BENJAMIN BUFFINGTON deceased, of said County. (The Petitioner has also applied for waiver of bond and/or grant of certain powers contained in O.C.G.A.

? 53-12-261.) All interested parties are hereby notified to show cause why said Petition should not be granted. All objections to the Petition must be in writing, setting forth the grounds of any such objections, and must be filed with the Court on or before **DECEMBER 29, 2025.**

BE NOTIFIED FURTHER: All objections to the Petition must be in writing, setting forth the grounds of any such objections. All objections should be sworn to before a notary public or before a Probate Court Clerk, and filing fees must be tendered with your objections, unless you qualify to file as an indigent party. Contact Probate Court personnel for the required amount of filing fees. If any objections are filed, a hearing will be (scheduled at a later date). If no objections are filed, the Petition may be granted without a hearing.

SHATARA POWELL
Judge of the Probate Court
By: NI?LEJA WILLIAMS
Clerk of the Probate Court
PO BOX 157
TALBOTTON, GA 31827
706-665-8866

(12:4, 11, 18, 25)

25-109

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF TALBOT COUNTY STATE OF GEORGIA

IN RE: ESTATE OF LILLIE OPHELIA DILLINGHAM , DECEASED

ESTATE NO. 2025-P-45

PETITION FOR LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION NOTICE

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: DORIS A. WILLIS and WALTER J. WILLIS JR. have petitioned to be appointed Administrator(s) of the estate of LILLIE OPHELIA DILLINGHAM deceased, of said County. (The Petitioner has also applied for waiver of bond and/or grant of certain powers contained in O.C.G.A. ? 53-12-261.) All interested parties are hereby notified to show cause why said Petition should not be granted. All objections to the Petition must be in writing, setting forth the grounds of any such objections, and must be filed with the Court on or before **DECEMBER 8, 2025.**

BE NOTIFIED FURTHER: All objections to the Petition must be in writing, setting forth the grounds of any such objections. All objections should be sworn to before a notary public or before a Probate Court Clerk, and filing fees must be tendered with your objections, unless you qualify to file as an indigent party. Contact Probate Court personnel for the required amount of filing fees. If any objections are filed, a hearing will be (scheduled at a later date). If no objections are filed, the Petition may be granted without a hearing.

SHATARA POWELL
Judge of the Probate Court
By: NI?LEJA WILLIAMS
Clerk of the Probate Court
PO BOX 157
TALBOTTON, GA 31827
706-665-8866

(11:13, 20, 27, 12:4)

FINE PRINT

STACEY ABRAMS



The First Step Toward Autocracy is Already Here

Here in Georgia, we have had a front-row seat to the erosion of democracy.

But it doesn't look like the movies or come with a cinematic moment of revelation. Instead, we are watching it unfold day by day in small non-events and headlines that fail to capture our attention for more than a few hours. Over time, we get so used to the chaos, the disruption and the brokenness that we adapt — like a distant alarm that becomes part of the background noise or that rut on the road that has never been fixed, so we learn to drive over it.

We know something is wrong; we know there's an issue that is causing harm — but we learn to accept it because that's just the way it is.

But it shouldn't be.

In recent months, I've been talking a lot about the "10 Steps to Autocracy and Authoritarianism." This framework serves as a translator. The regime that's attacking our way of life wants us to feel overwhelmed by what's happening around us and to us. But the 10 Steps show how all of the pieces fit together. Over the next few weeks, I intend to use "Fine Print" to help us see how what's happening around us is actually happening to us.

The bottom line is that authoritarians follow a playbook. By naming their steps, we expose their strategy. And by exposing their strategy, we empower ourselves to see their intentions — and defeat them. The "10 Steps to Autocracy and Authoritarianism" give us the intellectual scaffolding to recognize the danger signals, to see how each action by those in power fits into a broader design, and ultimately to arm ourselves with the information and tools we need to reclaim democracy for the people.

Today we're talking about Step 1 — winning (usually the last) free and fair election. As always, I'd like to thank Kim Lane Scheppele, who researched this framework and allowed me to slightly editorialize it.

Across recent history and the world, most of the politicians who eventually dismantled democracy were at first chosen in free and fair elections. Citizens cast their ballots believing they were participating in the normal democratic process, and election monitors certified those contests as legitimate. But in many of these cases, the warning signs were visible long before Election Day. Aspirational autocrats often make it clear — through word or action — that they are not fully committed to democratic values and ideals and that the institutions by which people exercise their rights should be destroyed.

In Turkey, Erdogan won power in 2003 even after his party was banned and he was jailed for stoking religious hatred. In Venezuela, Chavez was elected in 1999 after trying to overthrow the elected government. In Hungary, Orban spent years attacking the legitimacy of elections he lost — and then rewrote the rules once he got back in power in 2010. And in Brazil, Bolsonaro openly praised Brazil's 20th-century military coup and dictatorship long before his 2018 win — and has now been convicted and sentenced to 27 years in prison for plotting and participating in his own coup plot.

Of course, not every freely elected leader becomes an autocrat and not all authoritarians advertise their intentions in advance. But would-be strongmen often send unmistakable signals before winning the election that ultimately allows them to move against democratic institutions.

While Donald Trump's election in 2016 may not have conformed to the classic trajectory of an autocrat, his behavior over the following years did. He refused to concede the 2020 elec-

tion, incited supporters who violently attacked the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, and was ultimately indicted in both state and federal courts for plotting to overturn the election result. He tried to undermine the legitimacy of the judicial process by calling it a "witch hunt."

Now, within the first months of the second Trump administration, the pattern seen in places like Turkey, Venezuela, Hungary and Brazil has fully revealed itself in the United States.

So, you might be asking: what do we need to know?

Step 1 on the road to autocracy is that the erosion of democracy often begins with a legitimate election — even when warning signs are already flashing — which means we cannot wait until democratic systems are formally dismantled to push back. We must recognize these signals early, call them out clearly and organize before the next election. Failure to do so makes resistance exponentially harder.

We can't assume that because the election was legitimate, the resulting administration will be. As we've watched since January, an election cannot be used to justify the wanton cruelty and corruption that has marked every single day of this regime — like gutting health care or firing thousands of hardworking civil servants or the U.S. Coast Guard announcing that swastikas and nooses are no longer hateful, shameful symbols.

We also have to stop accepting that bad politicians do bad things because "they won fair and square." A free and fair election is not a hall pass to tyranny. As long as we cling to treating this new American order as something we simply need to survive, we are missing the point.

Yes, Republicans won the election — and they brought with them Christian nationalists, tech bros who have your private data, masked secret police, and the military occupation of cities like Memphis and Portland. This isn't normal, so assuming the next election will fix it simply won't do. I'm not calling for panic — but we must pay attention right now.

Authoritarianism isn't coming to America. It's here. Our job is to accept where we are and to plot our way forward — starting today.

While some of us may understand the threats we face, the reality hasn't quite broken through for a lot of Georgians. That's by design. When everything feels out of whack, nothing feels completely wrong.

A few months ago, I spent time with a naturalized citizen here in Georgia who had escaped a South American dictatorship decades before. We'd worked together many times, so I knew a bit of her story. When I asked about how she felt given what was happening in America, she shrugged.

"I don't watch the news; it's too depressing," she said. "What's going on?"

I spent the next few minutes updating her on the immigration ruling that authorizes racial profiling and the pending cuts to the Affordable Care Act. She is an independent contractor who gets her health care on the marketplace, and she has two children who could be targeted by ICE despite their citizenship.

She had no idea — but she wanted to know more.

You can be part of how we build the resistance. Join us at 10stepscampaign.org. We've got work to do.

Stacey Abrams is a bestselling author, entrepreneur and host of the podcast "Assembly Required." She previously served as minority leader in the Georgia House of Representatives. This column was originally published in her "Assembly Notes" Substack newsletter.

CLASSIFIEDS

MISCELLANEOUS

FOR SALE - AVON. Call Ginny 770-696-7548 or visit www.youravon.com/ginnynash RTFN

HAY FOR Sale; square bales and round rolls. Track hoe & track loader work: clearing, grading, driveways, pads, lake repairs, food plots. Call Jeff at 706-812-6906. RTFN

HELP WANTED

Full and Part Time

STRINGERS NEEDED - This newspaper is seeking individuals who can cover meetings, and/or sporting events and more. Excellent opportunity for high school student. For more information about e-mail to starmercuryjohn@gmail.com. RTFN

NEEDED: TRUSTWORTHY individual to help with collections and weekly drop route. Call 706-846-3188. RTFN

OFFICE SPACE FOR RENT

OFFICE SPACE for rent – perfect for local professional. Now accepting inquiries for professional office space in a well-lit,

high-ceiling shared suite in Greenville. Ideal for tax preparers, financial professionals, real estate agents, art studios, photographers, or any small business needing a clean, quiet, and well-appointed workspace. Shared kitchen and conference room. Rent: \$600–\$825 (private bath)/month. Included: High-speed internet, water, and trash service. Utilities: Power shared—tenant pays ¼ of monthly electric. Min: 6 month lease/ 1 month security deposit. Flexible and affordable for growing businesses or solo practi-

tioners. Email cat.jenkins@jenkinslawga.com Call (706) 450-9982 for details or to schedule a tour. 12:04

REAL ESTATE

Apartments for Rent

NICE, CLEAN 1 bedroom, 1 bath apartment for rent in Manchester to a single person. Yard maintenance and appliances included. 12 month lease and references required. \$600/month. (762) 319-2838. 12:04

\$12.00

and a phone call could help you turn your unwanted items into CASH!!

SELL IT FAST IN THE CLASSIFIEDS!

Classifieds have a little of everything from homes and land to cars, garage sales, pets and more. Buy, sell or trade with the classifieds.

You can reach 28,800 readers weekly when you advertise in this Features and Classifieds page.

Classifieds are \$12 for the first 25 words and .25 cents for each additional word. The advertisement will appear in *The Manchester Star-Mercury/Meriwether Indicator, The Harris County Journal, and The Talbotton New Era*, covering four counties. Please do not send in classifieds more than a week before the time you want the ad to run. We are not responsible for missed ads if sent in too early. starmercurynews@gmail.com

CLASSIFIED DEADLINE is NOON MONDAY.

To place a classified advertisement simply call: 706-846-3188 or e-mail starmercurynews@gmail.com



TALBOTTON HAS AN EV STATION - The City of Talbotton now has a recently installed electric charging station to accommodate the ongoing increase of the electric powered vehicles traveling through the area and for locally-owned vehicles. The electric vehicle filling station installed by Georgia Power Company is absolutely beautiful and located at the Talbot County Library on N. Jefferson Street. The station can be accessed through the existing entrance.

Contact The New Era by calling (706) 846-3188 or emailing: starmercuryjohn@gmail.com

CEHS Hawks Improve to 2-0 on the Season

By JOHN KUYKENDALL

The Central High Hawks improved to 2-0 on the season and the Lady Hawks fell in the team's season opener on the road in Columbus on Saturday, Nov. 22.

LADY HAWKS

The Lady Hawks opened the 2025-2025 basketball season on the road against the Kendrick High Lady Cherokees on Saturday, Nov. 22 and played hard, gave a valiant effort but were defeated by the score of 43-35.

Sorry, no individual statistics were available for the game.

The Lady Hawks will not return to the court until Tuesday, Dec. 9 when the team will host the Jordan High Lady Red Jackets at 4 p.m.

HAWKS

The Hawks improved the team record to 2-0 on the season after defeating the Red Jackets by a score of 57-42.

Senior Jamarion Williams led the Hawks in scoring in the game with 17 points, senior Brannon Bussey scored 15, sophomore Brody Leonard was the only other Hawk player to score in double digits with 10 points.

Other Hawk players adding to the offensive effort included: junior Ja'Quan Wilson, sophomore Jhi'Queez Hollis and sophomore Treavon Reed with four points each in



the game; junior Karmez Mitchell scored two points and sophomore Michael Bussey scored one point. The Hawks will return to action on Saturday Dec. 6 when the team will travel to Lumpkin to play the Stewart County Royal Knights at 2:30 p.m.

2026 GENEVA BUDGET PREPARATION SCHEDULE

The City of Geneva will hold their last Public Hearing on the Proposed Budget for "FY 2026" at 5:30 P.M., Dec. 8, 2025.

At 6:00 P.M. following the close of the Public Hearing, the Regular Council Meeting of the City of Geneva will convene, and the City Council will vote and adopt the "FY 2026 Budget".

HARVEST TIME MINISTRIES

Rev. Richard and Ginny Nash

Anointed Preaching and Singing

Brotherhood Meetings, Revivals, Fishing for Youth, Gospel Singings, Weddings and Funerals

PO Box 298
Manchester, Ga. 31816
(770) 696-7548

HARVEST TIME MINISTRIES

gin-lee1@live.com

Ministry Special Offer: King James Version Bible with Name Imprinted and Bible Cover for a donation of \$50 or more to our ministry...

We will put you on our mailing list. Call Ginny (770) 696-7548 for more information

PLEASE HIRE LOCAL

For any service you may need!

We're Still Making Loans

Home Loans • Land Loans
Debt Consolidation • More

TALBOT STATE BANK

Member FDIC

76 East Main Street • Woodland, GA

706-674-2215

www.talbotstatebank.com

BRAZEAL'S TRACTOR AND EQUIPMENT SALES

Service for Construction Equipment
Farm Tractor • Bobcat • Ditch Witch
Rebuild Hydraulic Cylinders

Bobcat

SAMMY BRAZEAL

41 RACE TRACT ROAD • LAGRANGE, GA

706-407-9106

Pre-Arrangement

Get peace of mind by taking away the burdening stress of decision making when losing a loved one.

DOZIER MEMORIALS

720 Warm Springs Hwy.
Manchester, GA 31816
706-846-5338
M-F 9am-5pm Sat. Appt. Only
www.doziernmemorials.com

BOB'S FIREWOOD

For all your firewood needs, call

706-302-9986

12159 DALLIS MILL ROAD

PINE MOUNTAIN, GA.

RONALD HALL BUILDER Inc.

Custom New Homes
Turn-Key or Supervised
Supervised Repairs
Free Consultation

65 YEARS EXPERIENCE

"One call knows it all!"

706.587.0815

NEW HOMES • ADDITIONS

CHURCH REMODELING

KITCHEN REMODELING

BATH REMODELING

CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

SCOTTS

Building & Remodeling

706-577-3066

We Pay Top \$\$\$ For Old Junk Cars!

Auto, Truck, Lead and Acid batteries are .25¢ per pound. Small batteries are less per pound.

BRING THEM IN TODAY!

DAVIS & SON

RECYCLING

8734 US 27 • Hamilton, GA

Earl T. 706-575-9505 Earl Jr. 706-566-4715

Talk to your neighbors, then talk to me.

Rick Knight, Agent

409 Copeland Lane PO Box 385
Hamilton, GA 31811
706-628-5588
www.rickknight.org

See why State Farm insures more drivers than GEICO and Progressive combined. Great service, plus discounts of up to 40 percent. Like a good neighbor, State Farm is there.®

State Farm

Discounts Vary By States
State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Company
State Farm Indemnity Company, Bloomington, IL
10011741